

A NEW CRASSULA FROM THE RICHTERSVELD.

By H. HERRE.

(With Plate XXI.)

Crassula fusca Herre sp. nov. Herba perennis, glaber 20—30 cm. alta. *Caulis ramique* teretes, internodiis viridibus vel roseis 4—5 mm. longis. *Folia* sessilia connata basi, 2—4 cm. longa, 9—15 mm. lata, acuta, superiore plana vel subconcaeva, dorso convexa, ad margines minutissime papillosa, faciebus alba-lineata. Habitat prope Numees et Hellskloof, Richtersveld, folia fusca similia *Aloë Pearsonii* Schoenl. in cultu $\pm$ viridia. *Inflorescentia* (dichasium) multiflora terminalis ex axillis foliorum superiorum 8—12 cm. longa et lata. Pedunculi 2—3 cm. longa: bracteis quam folia multo minoribus, *floribus* pedicellatis, *pedicellis* glabris, 2—3 mm. longis. *Sepala* 5, sublibera, lanceolata, acuminata, dorso leviter convexa, viridia, rufo-cincta, glaber, ca. 2 mm. longa. *Petala* 5, juvenilia alba, adulta pallidissima rosea, sublibera, lanceolata, acuminata, apice leviter recurva, 3—3.25 mm. longa, 1—1.25 mm. lata. *Carpidia* ca. 2 mm. longa. *Stamina* 5, ca. 2.5—3 mm. longa, *filamentis* albis, antheris oblongis, luteis. *Squamae* obcuneatae, luteae, ca. 0.5 mm. latae.

Perennial, glabrous, stems ascending, about 20—30 cm. long with an additional 8—12 cm. for the inflorescence. The stem is about 5 mm. in diameter. Internodes start with 4—5 mm. in length while the last one is about 1—2 cm. long. All are greenish to reddish. *Leaves* 2—4 cm. long, 9—15 mm. broad, amplexicaul, connate at their base, acuminate, sometimes recurved at the apex, fleshy, slightly concave on the inner side, slightly convex on the outer, glabrous, margined with tiny white papillae, thus forming a white edge; green, densely punctate. In its home the leaves are rust-red like those of *Aloë Pearsonii* Schoenl. and the name is derived from these most beautiful coloured leaves. In cultivation they are more or less green, especially when kept in shade. The *inflorescence* is a many flowered dichasial cyme about 8—12 cm. long and broad. The *floral bracts* are like the foliage leaves but much smaller. The *cyme branches* are glabrous, 2—3 mm. long and at least one of the flowers is almost sessile. The 5 *sepals* are almost free, pale-green or tinged reddish, lanceolate, acute, dorsally slightly convex, glabrous, about 2 mm. long. *Petals* 5, white, when older light pink, almost free, lanceolate, acuminate, recurved at the apex, about 3—3.25 mm. long and 1—1.25 mm. broad. *Stamens* 5, about 0.5—1 mm. longer than the pistil, which is about 2 mm. long. *Filaments* white, anthers yellow. *Carpels* slender, colourless. *Squamae* yellowish, obcuneate, about 0.5 mm. broad.

This fine species is nearly related to *Crassula MacOwaniana* Schoenl. et Bak.f. but differs from it in forming smaller bushes, which have much smaller leaves of another shape, which also show their fine colour especially in their natural environment. The inflorescence and the inner parts of the flower differ too.

Numees, Hellskloof, Richtersveld. *H. Herre*. Sept. 1929. Oct. 1930. Oct. 1933. Oct. 1939. *P. van Heerde*, June 1949. University Botanic Garden Stellenbosch No. 6077. Flowering: Nov. 1932; Dec. 1933; Nov. 1937; Dec. 1939; Nov./Dec. 1949.

As can be made out from the collecting dates given above, this species was collected for the first time by myself during my first visit to the Richtersveld in 1929, but as the plant was at first thought to be a variety or form of *C. Macowaniana* no description was written down. But the following two collections showed that our plant had nothing to do with the latter species, but seemed to be a good new one. Unfortunately the plants died again and only a bit of them had been preserved in alcohol, but this was not sufficient for a good description. When I collected the plant again in 1939 I sent material of it to the Nestor of the genus *Crassula*, Dr. S. Schoenland at Grahamstown. It was only some weeks before his death that he let me know, that after his careful identification it was a good, new species and he suggested that I describe it as I knew it best in its natural home as also in cultivation. I tried to do so, but before it flowered again, the plants died. It was nearly 10 years later when Mr. P. v. Heerde of Springbok, the well-known succulent collector of that area succeeded to get this plant again after I had told him where to look for it. Now I was able to draw up a proper description and to illustrate it by a good photograph of a flowering branch. Hence after all these misfortunes this fine species, which is probably the last new one of this large genus which its careful worker, the late Dr. S. Schoenland, has had in his hands, can be published and no doubt will make friends when introduced into cultivation. As regards this, it is not more difficult than other species. It likes a resting period after the flowering time, but as it grows near the Hellskloof which catches quite a lot of clouds and rains with its high mountains, it must not be cultivated too dry, otherwise it collapses, which happened with us before. On the other hand it never wants to be too wet. In its natural environment it grows either alone among stones and crevices or together with other shrubs in the shade or half-shade of higher ones. The plants surely become bigger than those shown in our photographs.



PLATE XXI.
Crassula fusca Herre.

FIG. 1. A plant growing in the Richtersveld (Numees, Hell's Kloof).

FIG. 2. A plant grown in a rock-garden at Stellenbosch University Botanic Garden.

FIG. 3. A pot-plant at Stellenbosch University Botanic Garden.